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Former Vietnam POW heads Navy War College

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NEWPORT — In a brief military ceremony on the back terrace of Spruance Hall, Vice Adm. James B. Stockdale yesterday was handed command of the Naval War College as Rear Adm. Huntington Hardisty, acting president, read off new orders to command the Navy's Philippines Fleet.

Stockdale, who won the Medal of Honor for his leadership of U.S. prisoners during the seven years he spent in a North Vietnamese prison, had previously been director of the Strategy, Plans and Policy Division of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations.

Calling his new command "the realization of dreams that have gone on for at least 10 years," he said he planned no drastic changes in the War College curriculum.

He said he already had received advice from colleagues and old friends on how to perform the job. One old friend, he said, just sent him a telegram saying that he is bound to be deluged with advice urging him toward

conflicting paths. The telegram urged him to ignore it all and get on with the job of running the college.

The telegram was from CIA director Stansfield Turner, who is a past president of the Naval War College.

STOCKDALE read off 100-year-old quotes from the first president of the War College who stressed the value of history over "hardware" as a focus of study for the 380 commander-level officers who annually enroll in the school's graduate-level program.

Stockdale went on to stress that war is a "basically illogical business" and should be studied as such. He compared it to a duel or brawl on a national level, adding that human emotions under stress are a better gauge of how nations react than logic.

Stockdale was lauded by Adm. James L. Holloway 3rd, chief of naval operations, as a man whose performance while a prisoner of war has earned him a "permanent place among all naval heroes."

The new president will begin his duties immediately.



—Journal-Bulletin Photo by J. DAVID LAMONTAGNE

Vice Adm. James B. Stockdale